

## **Anniversary of D-Day Marks “Greatest Generation’s” Finest Hour**

By Supervisor Gary Ovitt

June 6 marks the 63rd anniversary of the D-Day invasion of Normandy, France, an important turning point in the European front of World War II that led to the defeat of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis ten months later.

In the planning stages for over a year, General (and future U.S. President) Dwight Eisenhower planned the overwhelming offensive of U.S, British, and Canadian forces as the opening of a second front in the War in Europe that would ultimately save the world for democracy.

When General Eisenhower finally made the decision to begin the liberation of Europe, our finest soldiers, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division’s “All Americans” and the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division’s “Screaming Eagles” led the invading forces. The groundwork laid in motion by America’s bravest paved the way for Allied forces to advance across France and later into Berlin.

A few years ago, the bravery of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne and their important contributions to the success of the D-Day invasion was recognized by renaming a portion of Highway 101 in Southern California in honor of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne’s “Screaming Eagles.”

Having lived in freedom and comfort on our shores for so long, it is hard for many young people to comprehend that the spirit of America would be under attack as it was during World War II. The aggression of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini forced the people of Europe to live in a cloud of fear. The Axis powers’ alliance with the Japanese threatened our very way of life in the United States.

The importance of D-Day in restoring freedom and democracy cannot be understated. As we are a nation at war, a new generation is experiencing the struggle to protect our way of life. Once again, the brave men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces are leading the charge to restore democracy to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Our gratitude for these brave souls who fought to protect us knows no bounds. As Americans, we never forget their countless sacrifices to keep our nation safe, and honor their service when they come home from battle.

As we remember the brave men and women of the “Greatest Generation” who saved the world for democracy, it is also important to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We must never forget their bravery of our fallen heroes when honoring the World War II generation.

Speaking on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day invasion at ceremonies held at Omaha Beach, President Reagan perhaps best summed up the thoughts of a grateful American people, stating that “today, in their memory, and for all who fought here, we celebrate the

triumph of democracy. We reaffirm the unity of democratic people who fought a war and then joined with the vanquished in a firm resolve to keep the peace.”

As we remember the 63rd Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion, I join with all Californians in thanking the members of the Greatest Generation for their bravery in saving the world for democracy.